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NEWS
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DR. ALVAREZ SAYS:

Coronary Linked To Heavy Smoker

By WALTER ALVAREZ, M.D., Emeritus Member, Mayo Clinic

I think most physicians have accepted the results of some 18 or 20 statistical studies which indicate strongly that anyone who smokes from two to three packages of cigarettes a day is much more likely than a non-smoker to get a cancer of the lung.

Back in the '30s Dr. Raymond Pearl—perhaps the greatest medical statistician of his



time—showed that, as compared with non-smokers, heavy smokers died earlier from a number of causes.

There could be no argument about that, because some 20 or 30 per cent of the heavy smokers in Pearl's group were gone.

Of late there has been considerable suspicion cigarettes can make the person more susceptible to a coronary attack.

THE LATEST REPORT, submitted by live doctors, is based on observations of 4,120 men who at the beginning of the study were free from heart disease.

They were studied in two communities. The men in one group varied in age from 39 to 60 years and their course was followed for eight years. Some smoked cigars or pipes.

They were divided into those former smokers who had given up cigarettes; those who smoked cigars or a pipe; those who smoked less than 20 cigarettes a day, and those who smoked more than 20 cigarettes a day.

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Better Health

Stop Cough, Stop Cancer

By C. A. DEAN, M.D.

Many years ago a public health campaign was started to stop spitting in public places. This was done to reduce tuberculosis since it was felt that many cases were spread in this manner. Time has proven it helpful even though we have not completely eliminated tuberculosis.

A new program—stop that cough—is being proposed. You may wonder how and why this should be done.

Coughing is an important symptom since it is the commonest sign of irritation in the bronchial tubes and lungs. Many coughs are due to infection, last only a short time and are treatable. However, this is not the type of cough I am referring to. Rather, it is the chronic, dry, hacking cough seen so often found in the heavy smoker that needs curbing.

As more is learned about chronic coughs, it becomes apparent that most do occur in smokers. In fact, many of my patients admit they have "smokers' cough." These people have observed that the cough disappears when they stop smoking. It is this observation which has prompted the stop-that-cough campaign.

Smokers, as is well known, are more prone to develop lung cancer. Since most smokers cough and since a cough is the commonest symptom of lung cancer, it is felt that a connection exists between the two. By eliminating the smoking habit a person can cut his chances of developing lung cancer to practically zero. At the same time he can get rid of an annoying symptom.

It is clear now that lung cancer is preventable, if everyone joined the stop-that-cough movement.

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THE HEAVY cigarette smokers experienced a three-fold incidence of heart attacks, and their mortality rate from all causes was higher than that of the non-smokers; or of the smokers of pipes and cigars, or of the men who had once smoked cigarettes but later had quit. Cigarette smoking had a tendency to produce severe pain in the chest with effort.

Cheering is the fact that the once heavy smokers lost their decided tendency to heart attacks.

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